

PATENT
Attorney Docket No. 002250-2


**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

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AUG 24 2007

In re Patent Application of:) Confirmation No.: 2660
Michael B. SUNDEL) Group Art Unit: 3692
Serial No. 09/996,825) Examiner: N. Subramanian
Filed: November 30, 2001)
For: **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR**) Date: August 24, 2007
FACILITATING SHIPMENT OF PACKAGES)

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Peaches Thomas

APPEAL BRIEF

As set forth in the Notice of Appeal filed May 2, 2007, Appellants hereby appeal the Examiner's final rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34 and 36-51 of the above-identified application. Appellants respectfully request that the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences reverse the final rejection of these claims.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

Worldpak, Inc., is the real party in interest.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no related appeals or interferences.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34 and 36-51 have been finally rejected and are the subject matter of this appeal.

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Application No. 09/996,825**IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS**

A supplemental amendment has been submitted on July 3, 2007, after the final rejection mailed November 2, 2006. The supplemental amendment, filed prior to this Brief, amends claims 1 and 33.

The Examiner notes, in an Advisory Action mailed July 23, 2007, that the amendments "will not be entered because [t]hey are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal".

Appellants note that the proposed amendment merely corrected typographical errors that produced antecedent basis issues. Therefore, Appellants request the amendment be entered, as the amendment overcomes the outstanding 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejections and simplifies the issues for appeal.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

This Appeal is taken from claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34, and 36-51, of which claims 1 and 33 are independent.

With respect to claim 1, the present invention recited therein relates to a computer-implemented method for processing shipment and return of a package containing items from a Sender to a Recipient, the method having the steps: electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, in a database, before shipment occurs; electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender, from a shipping mechanism; electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database; electronically correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data for the package; electronically determining whether the package requires customs clearance and, if so, electronically generating the appropriate customs documentation or data transmission to a customs broker; permitting an authorized user to query the database for processing the shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and the return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package; and rendering data for display to the authorized user, based on a query of the database for shipping parameters of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package. Support for the claimed features can be found at least on e.g., Figures 1-5, paragraphs [0017], [0020], [0022], and [0028] – [0030] of the specification.

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Claims 2, 4-11, and 23-31 depend from independent claim 1. Claims 2, 4-11, and 23-31 describe additional features of the system of independent claim 1, including, for example, features relating to the step of electronically storing package data including transmitting package data via the Internet; features relating to the permitting step including receiving a query over a computer network and transmitting data from the database over the computer network in response to the query parameters; and features relating to the additional steps of electronically adding returned item information to the database if items from the package are returned to the Sender, in the case of international shipments, electronically preparing duty and tax refund claims based on the returned item information and the corresponding item data, and electronically adding duty and tax refund information to the database. Claims 2, 4-11, and 23-31 are supported at least by paragraphs [0017], [0022], [0031] – [0034], [0037], [0038], and [0040] of the specification.

With respect to claim 33, the present invention recited therein relates to a computer-implemented system for processing shipment and return of a package containing items from a Sender to a Recipient, the system having means for electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, in a database, before shipment occurs; means for electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender; means for electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database; means for electronically correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data for the package; means for electronically determining whether the package requires customs clearance and, if so, means for electronically generating the appropriate customs documentation or data transmission to a customs broker; means for permitting an authorized user to query the database for processing the shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and the return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package; and means for rendering data for display to the authorized user, based on a query of the database for shipping parameters of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package. Support for the claimed features can be found at least on e.g., Figure 6, paragraphs [0035], [0036], and [0039] – [0043] of the specification.

Claims 34 and 36-51 depend from independent claim 33. Claims 34 and 36-51 describe additional features of the system of independent claim 33, including, for example,

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features relating to the step of electronically storing package data including transmitting package data via the Internet; features relating to the permitting step including receiving a query over a computer network and transmitting data from the database over the computer network in response to the query parameters; and features relating to the additional means for electronically adding returned item information to the database if items from the package are returned to the Sender, in the case of international shipments, means for electronically preparing duty and tax refund claims based on the returned item information and the corresponding item data, and means for electronically adding duty and tax refund information to the database. Claims 34 and 36-51 are supported at least by paragraphs [0017], [0022], [0031] -[0034], [0037], [0038], and [0040] of the specification.

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION

Appellants respectfully request the Board to reverse the following grounds of rejection:

Rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34 and 36-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to support the subject matter set forth in the claims.

Rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34, and 36-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Rejection of claims 33, 34, and 36-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter, as inoperative and therefore lacking utility.

Rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34, and 36-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Williams et al. (U.S. Publication Number 2002/0032612) in view of Le et al. (U.S. Publication Number 2003/0069831).

VII. ARGUMENTS

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34 and 36-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to support the subject matter set forth in the claims, should be REVERSED.

35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, imposes the requirement that claims, to be patentable, must be supported by the specification as originally filed. That is, the specification must provide support for the subject matter set forth in the claims. The test to be applied under the written description portion of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, is

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whether the disclosure of the application as originally filed reasonably conveys to the artisan that the inventor had possession at that time of later claimed subject matter. *Vas-Cat, Inc. v. Mahurkar*, 935 F.2d 1555, 1565, 19 USPQ2d 111, 118 (Fed. Cir. 1991), reh'g denied (Fed. Cir. July 8, 1991), reh'g, en banc, denied (Fed. Cir. July 29, 1991).

Claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34, and 36-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to support the subject matter set forth in the claims. Appellant submits that the language "electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, in a database, before shipment occurs", as is recited in independent claims 1 and 33, is fully supported in the original specification as filed.

Appellant notes that the first step of the method of the present invention is described in paragraph [0020] and shown in Figure 1 of the Specification. As described in paragraph [0020], "the first step in the process is the pre-processing of package data. Package data is initially received, in step 112, from the Sender, and rendered as record 616 into a format that can be entered into database 602 (Fig. 6). There can be one record 616 per package or plural records 616 per package, or package data for plural packages can be stored in a single record."

As described in paragraph [0020] of the Specification, the first or initial step of the method of claim 1 is receiving and processing package data. Thus, the language "electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, in a database, before shipment occurs", as is recited in independent claims 1 and 33, is fully supported in the original specification as filed. Appellant requests this rejection be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34 and 36-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention, should be REVERSED.

35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, imposes the requirement that claims, to be patentable, must particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. That is, claims are rejected as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1 and 33 are rejected for lack of antecedent basis for reciting the limitation "tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more

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items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender". The Examiner asserts that there is no antecedent basis for the limitation because the shipment or return of the package has not been positively recited before this limitation.

Appellant submits that the limitation has antecedent basis in the preamble of claims 1 and 33. The preamble of claim 1 describes a "method for processing shipment and return of a package containing items from a Sender to a Recipient". Claim 1 then describes, in an element of the claim, "electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender". Because the limitation "tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender" is described first in the preamble, the limitation has antecedent basis. Appellant requests this rejection be withdrawn.

For the remaining claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Appellant refers to previously submitted Supplemental Amendment filed July 3, 2007. By the Supplemental Amendment, all remaining claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are believed overcome. Appellant requests the amendments be entered and the rejections be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 33, 34, and 36-51 under 35 U.S.C. §101, as being unpatentable because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter, should be REVERSED.

35 U.S.C. § 101 imposes the requirement that an invention, to be patentable, must be directed to statutory subject matter, which is "any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter." As the Supreme Court held, Congress chose the expansive language of 35 U.S.C. § 101 so as to include "anything under the sun that is made by man." *Diamond v. Chakrabarty*, 447 U.S. 303, 308-09, 206 USPQ 193, 197 (1980).

Claims 33, 34, and 36-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as inoperative and lacking utility. The Examiner asserts that "[c]laims 33, 34, and 36-51 merely recite elements of an apparatus or a system ("means for" corresponds to software program elements and not tangible hardware components) without showing any ability to realize functionality of the recited elements (i.e., functional descriptive material per se) and therefore is rendered inoperative lacking any utility." The Examiner notes that "Figure 6 of the applicant's drawings only shows some hardware elements of the system. It is not clear how these

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elements are related to the claimed invention. Applicant has not shown how these hardware elements map on to the limitations of the claimed invention.”

Appellant notes that claims 33, 34, and 36-51 describe a system, implemented on a computer by software, for tracking shipping data, and, in response to a user query, rendering a display of the shipping data for viewing. Appellant submits that all of the claims are in compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 101 and notes the support for the means-plus-function claim is shown in, for example, FIG. 6 and the discussion in Appellant’s published specification thereof, which clearly recites exemplary hardware components corresponding the means plus function claim elements, as recited in claims 33, 34, and 36-51.

More specifically, the system is described in detail in paragraphs [0035] and [0036] with reference to Figure 6. In independent claim 33, the “means for electronically storing package data”, “means for electronically retrieving shipment tracking data”, means for electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database”, means for electronically correlating the package data”, and “means for electronically determining... and, if so, electronically generating the appropriate customs documentation” are illustrated in Figure 6 by the processor/database 602. The elements “means for permitting and authorized user to query the database” and “means for rendering data for display” are described in paragraphs [0041] and [0042], and are illustrated in Figure 6 by shipper’s terminal 610 and customs broker’s terminal 614.

Accordingly, claims 33, 34, and 36-51 are in compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 101. Appellant requests this rejection be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34, and 36-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Williams et al. (U.S. Publication Number 2002/0032612) in view of Le et al. (U.S. Publication Number 2003/0069831), should be REVERSED.

35 U.S.C. § 103 imposes the requirement that an invention, to be patentable, must not have been obvious over the prior art “at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.” A proper prima facie showing of obviousness requires the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (“PTO”) to satisfy three requirements. First, the prior art itself must suggest the desirability and, therefore, obviousness of a modification of a reference or the combination of references to achieve a claimed invention. See *Hodosh v. Block Drug Co.*, 786 F.2d 1136, 1143 n.5, 229 USPQ 182, 187 n.5 (Fed. Cir. 1986); *In re Gordon*, 733 F.2d 900, 902, 221 USPQ 1125, 1127 (Fed. Cir.

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1984); see also *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 1074, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Second, the PTO must show that, at the time the invention was made, the proposed modification had a reasonable expectation of success. See *Amgen v. Chugai Pharm. Co.*, 927 F.2d 1200, 1209, 18 USPQ2d 1016, 1023 (Fed. Cir. 1991). Finally, the combination of references must teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claimed invention. See *In re Wilson*, 424 F.2d 1382, 1385, 165 USPQ 494, 496 (CCPA 1970).

Further, the question of obviousness should be analyzed in light of the holding of *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 17 (1966) which sets forth the following factors for determining obviousness: (1) the scope and content of the prior art; (2) differences between the prior art and the claims at issue; (3) the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art; and (4) such objective evidence of non-obviousness as commercial success, long felt but unresolved needs, and failure of others. All evidence must be weighed before reaching a conclusion on obviousness under § 103. *Panduit Corp. v. Dennison Mfg. Co.*, 810 F.2d 1561, 1564, 1 USPQ2d 1593, 1594 (Fed. Cir. 1987); *Hodosh v. Block Drug*, 786 F.2d at 1143, 229 USPQ at 187-88.

Additionally, the Supreme Court has recently⁸ stated that “a patent composed of several elements is not proved obvious merely by demonstrating that each of its elements was, independently, known in the prior art.” *KSR Int’l Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 127 S. Ct. 1727, 1741 (2007). “[I]nventions in most, if not all, instances rely upon building blocks long since uncovered, and claimed discoveries almost of necessity will be combinations of what, in some sense, is already known.” *Id.*

In response to the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34, and 36-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, as being unpatentable over Williams in view of Le, Appellant refers to the Declaration filed under 37 C.F.R. § 1.132 on November 30, 2001. The Declaration indicates the commercial success of the present invention. The Declaration was timely filed and is evidence relevant to the present invention as indicia of unobviousness. As such, the Appellant notes that the Examiner does not appear to have considered the Declaration. (See MPEP 716.01(a)). For this reason, the claims are believed to be in a condition for allowance and withdraw of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, 23-31, 33, 34, and 36-51 with respect to Williams in view of Le is respectfully requested.

Additionally, Appellant submits that claims 1 and 33 are patentably distinct over Williams in view of Le. The pending claims are patently distinguishable over Williams in

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view of Le because both Williams and Le fail to disclose all of the features of the pending claims. For example, independent claim 1, as amended (emphasis added), recites:

A computer-implemented method for processing shipment and return of a package containing items from a Sender to a Recipient, the method comprising the steps of:

electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, in a database, before shipment occurs;

electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender, from a shipping mechanism;

electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database;

electronically correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data for the package;

electronically determining whether the package requires customs clearance and, if so, electronically generating the appropriate customs documentation or data transmission to a customs broker;

permitting an authorized user to query the database for processing the shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and the return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package; and

rendering data for display to an authorized user, based on a query of the database for shipping parameters of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one more items of the items of the package.

Independent claim 33, as amended (emphasis added), recites:

A computer-implemented system for processing shipment and return of a package containing items from a Sender to a Recipient, the system comprising:

means for electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, in a database, before shipment occurs;

means for electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender;

means for electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database;

means for electronically correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data for the package;

means for electronically determining whether the package requires customs clearance and, if so, electronically generating the appropriate customs documentation or data transmission to a customs broker;

means for permitting an authorized user to query the database for processing the shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and the return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package; and

means for rendering data for display to an authorized user, based on a query of the database for shipping parameters of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return from the

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Recipient to the Sender of the one more items of the items of the package.

Thus, the pending independent claims 1 and 33 are directed to a novel method and system for processing shipment and return of a package to destinations worldwide. (See Specification ¶ 29). Advantageously, the claimed invention supports international shipping and tracking of packages and package contents. (See Specification ¶¶ 17 and 19).

Referencing Examiner's argument that Williams "discloses that product information is repeated for every product in the package. . . . [thus] the products in the package are distinguished from the package itself thereby enabling tracking of each product," such that Williams discloses the features in the present application of "correlating package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, with shipment tracking data for the package," Appellant respectfully disagrees. (See Office Action, May 2, 2006, page 7). Williams appears to disclose a return tracking system where item data is stored upon the return of the item by the Recipient. Advantageously, the Appellant's invention is distinct from Williams because **individual items within a package are tracked before being shipped by the Sender.** (See Specification ¶ 17).

Referencing Examiner's argument that Le "teaches the step of electronically determining whether the package requires customs clearance ... and also the step of rendering data for display to an authorized user, based on a query of the database for shipping parameters of the package", Appellant notes that Le appears to disclose an international tracking system where packages are tracked through international shipping systems. Le does not disclose a system where **individual items within a package are tracked before being shipped by the Sender.** Additionally, Le does not provide for return information for each item in a package, as is claimed.

Both Williams and Le, alone or in combination, fail to teach, disclose, or suggest all of the features of the Appellant's invention as recited in independent claims 1 and 33. Further, claims 2, 4-11, 23-31, 34, and 36-51 are dependent from the above independent claims. For this reason and at least the reasons stated above, the claims are believed to be in a condition for allowance and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection with respect to Williams in view of Le is respectfully requested.

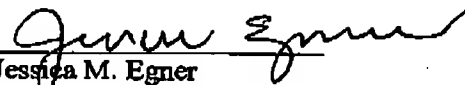
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Since the Examiner's final rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 101, and 103 are believed to be overcome, withdrawal of these rejections is requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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VIII. CLAIM APPENDIX

Claims Involved in the Appeal

1. A computer-implemented method for processing shipment and return of a package containing items from a Sender to a Recipient, the method comprising the steps of:

electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, in a database, before shipment occurs;

electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender, from a shipping mechanism;

electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database;

electronically correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data for the package;

electronically determining whether the package requires customs clearance and, if so, electronically generating the appropriate customs documentation or data transmission to a customs broker;

permitting an authorized user to query the database for processing the shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and the return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package; and

rendering data for display to the authorized user, based on a query of the database for shipping parameters of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

electronically assigning the package to a specific combination of a shipper and shipping method based on the package data.

3. (Canceled)

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the package data includes at least the originating address and the destination address, and the item data includes a description of the items in the package, said method further comprising the step of:

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using the package data to electronically calculate shipping charges and electronically generate invoices associated with the shipment.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the item data includes the description and value of each item.

6. The method of Claim 4, wherein the step of electronically storing package data comprises transmitting package data via the Internet.

7. The method of claim 4, wherein said permitting step comprises receiving a query over a computer network and transmitting data from the database over the computer network in response to the query parameters.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the computer network comprises the Internet.

9. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

electronically adding returned item information to the database if items from the package are returned to the Sender;

in the case of international shipments, electronically preparing duty and tax refund claims based on the returned item information and the corresponding item data; and

electronically adding duty and tax refund information to the database.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said permitting step comprises receiving a query over a computer network and transmitting data from the database over the computer network in response to the query parameters.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the computer network comprises the Internet.

12-22. (Cancelled)

23. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

selecting a shipping assignment for the package based on the package data.

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24. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
generating appropriate shipping documents for the package.
25. The method of Claim 24, wherein said shipping documents comprise package labels.
26. The method of Claim 24, wherein said shipping documents comprise shipping manifests.
27. The method of Claim 24, wherein said shipping documents comprise customs forms.
28. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
providing a Web site page for permitting the authorized user to query the database.
29. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
generating duty and tax refund claims based upon receipt of returned item data.
30. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
adding returned item information to said database if items from a package are returned to the Sender, and
preparing duty and tax refund claims based on the returned item information.
31. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method is implemented with a computer program product including one or more computer-readable instructions embedded therein and configured to cause one or more computer processors to perform the steps of the method.
32. (Canceled)
33. A computer-implemented system for processing shipment and return of a package containing items from a Sender to a Recipient, the system comprising:
means for electronically storing package data, for the package, and including item data, for the items in the package, in a database, before shipment occurs;

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means for electronically retrieving shipment tracking data, for tracking shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return of one or more items of the items of the package from the Recipient to the Sender;

means for electronically adding the shipment tracking data to the database;

means for electronically correlating the package data in the database with the shipment tracking data for the package;

means for electronically determining whether the package requires customs clearance and, if so, means for electronically generating the appropriate customs documentation or data transmission to a customs broker;

means for permitting an authorized user to query the database for processing the shipment of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and the return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package; and

means for rendering data for display to the authorized user, based on a query of the database for shipping parameters of the package from the Sender to the Recipient and return from the Recipient to the Sender of the one or more items of the items of the package.

34. The system of Claim 33, further comprising:

means for electronically assigning the package to a specific combination of a shipper and shipping method based on the package data.

35. (Cancelled)

36. The system of Claim 33, wherein the package data includes at least the originating address and the destination address, and the item data includes a description of the items in the package, said system further comprising:

means for using the package data to electronically calculate shipping charges and electronically generate invoices associated with the shipment.

37. The system of Claim 36, wherein the item data includes the description and value of each item.

38. The system of Claim 36, wherein the means for electronically storing package data includes means for transmitting package data via the Internet.

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39. The system of claim 36, wherein said permitting means includes means for receiving a query over a computer network and means for transmitting data from the database over the computer network in response to the query parameters.

40. The system of Claim 39, wherein the computer network comprises the Internet.

41. The system of Claim 33, further comprising:

means for electronically adding returned item information to the database if items from the package are returned to the Sender;

in the case of international shipments, means for electronically preparing duty and tax refund claims based on the returned item information and the corresponding item data; and

means for electronically adding duty and tax refund information to the database.

42. The system of claim 41, wherein said permitting means comprises means for receiving a query over a computer network and means for transmitting data from the database over the computer network in response to the query parameters.

43. The system of Claim 42, wherein the computer network comprises the Internet.

44. The system of Claim 33, further comprising:

means for selecting a shipping assignment for the package based on the package data.

45. The system of Claim 33, further comprising:

means for generating appropriate shipping documents for the package.

46. The system of Claim 45, wherein said shipping documents comprise package labels.

47. The system of Claim 45, wherein said shipping documents comprise shipping manifests.

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48. The system of Claim 45, wherein said shipping documents comprise customs forms.

49. The system of Claim 33, further comprising:
means for providing a Web site page for permitting the authorized user to query the database.

50. The system of Claim 33, further comprising:
means for generating duty and tax refund claims based upon receipt of returned item data.

51. The system of Claim 33, further comprising:
means for adding returned item information to said database if items from a package are returned to the Sender, and
means for preparing duty and tax refund claims based on the returned item information.

52. (Canceled)

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IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

There is no additional evidence relied upon in this brief.

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X. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

There are no related appeals or interferences.